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A

COURSE OF LECTURES

FOR

Sunday Evenings.

Fleur de lis watermark
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FRONTISPIECE

Dodd del.t T. Cook sculp.t

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A

COURSE OF LECTURES,

FOR

Sunday Evenings.

CONTAINING

RELIGIOUS ADVICE

TO

YOUNG PERSONS.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JOHN MARSHALL, NO. 4, ALDERMARY CHURCH-YARD, BOW-LANE, AND NO. 17, QUEEN-STREET, CHEAPSIDE.

To ——, ——, ——, ——.

My dear young Friends,

AS I have a very high opinion of the goodneſs of your hearts, and am deeply intereſted in your future happineſs; I ſhall take the liberty of dedicating to you a work, of which your conduct and your requeſt were the original occaſion.

I HAVE, throughout the whole, addreſſed myſelf in the *ſingular* number, though without any intention of excluding *any* of you from an equal ſhare in my regard; but merely, that *each* may take it as friendly expoſtulation, and private advice.

Religion is the higheſt concern of every individual; and therefore, is not diſtinguiſhed (as are many of your accompliſhments) by being peculiar to either *ſex*, or to difference of ſituation. You *all* are *alike* obliged to pay obedience to the laws of God, to the duties of ſocial life, and to the regulation of your tempers and manners; for which reaſon, every thing that can promote theſe important deſigns, ſhould engage your attention and regard.

The concerns of this life are of no further avail, than as they contribute to form your ſouls for the enjoyment of a future ſtate. This is but a tranſitory ſituation: a *very few* years may finiſh your exiſtence upon earth, and then its joys or its ſorrows will

be paſt and forgotten. But the remembrance of your *actions*, the pleaſure of your good, or the remorſe for your evil deeds will *never* be effaced. Your happineſs or miſery throughout all *Eternity*, depends upon the improvement which you *now* make of the advantages you enjoy.

RECOLLECT *this* when you are likely to be ſeduced by temptation: and may the Almighty Governor of the world take you into his protection, guard you from the evil examples of life, and conduct you in the paths of virtue to a happy immortality hereafter.

MAY his bleſſing attend on the inſtructions which you will find in the following pages, and diſpoſe your

your hearts to improve by the truths which they contain.

So will this proof of my friendſhip be a laſting advantage, and evince to you, with what ſincerity I ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your affectionate,

S—— S——.

INTRODUCTION.

I WENT a few months ago to paſs ſome time with an intimate friend who has ſeveral children; and whoſe cuſtom it uſually is to read to his family on a *Sunday* evening. But I was rather ſurpriſed to find, that the younger part of his auditors appeared to be entirely inattentive to the ſerious truths which were contained in a very rational and well written diſcourſe.

THE eldeſt daughter ſat for ſome time liſtening with great earneſtneſs; but by degrees, her eyes grew heavy, her head inclined alternately on either ſide, till ſhe fell

into a profound ſleep, interrupted only by involuntary ſtarts when in danger of falling. Her ſiſter, though more *wakeful*, was not better engaged, as ſhe employed herſelf in counting the ſpots on her pocket handkerchief, and afterward in tying it into various forms; which, by attracting the obſervation of her brothers, ſeemed to engage them much more than any thing they might have heard from their father.

I TOOK the liberty, therefore, the next morning to remonſtrate with them on the impropriety of ſuch behaviour; and received for anſwer, that they could not, when they had taken the utmoſt pains to underſtand what their father had been reading, at all comprehend it: and therefore, if they did not in ſome manner amuſe themſelves, it would be impoſſible to keep awake; as ſuch a long and ſilent confinement ſo much diſpoſed them to be drowſy, that they could not refrain from ſleep: but that, if the ſubjects were ſuited to the level of their capa-

cities, they ſhould very *willingly* attend: and concluded with a fervent wiſh, that they had more religious books which they could comprehend.

THIS reply, I muſt acknowledge, appeared to me to be founded in nature and truth. For how can the mind be expected to attend to thoſe inſtructions which are beyond its powers to conceive? and how can our conduct be influenced by thoſe arguments, whoſe force we are deſtitute of abilities to diſcern?

THE ſubject which my friend was engaged in reading, on the evening to which I have above alluded, was, The folly and miſchief of religious zeal, when not guided by the ſpirit of charity, and directed in its exertions by the rules of prudence: and though it was handled in a maſterly and convincing manner, the ſtyle was far ſuperior to the weak and puerile ideas of children.

In hope, therefore, of engaging their reflections on the duties of life, by ſuiting the arguments to their preſent circumſtances and comprehenſions, I have engaged in the following work: and ſincerely wiſh it may anſwer the purpoſe for which it was written.

A

COURSE OF LECTUREES

FOR

Sunday Evenings.

SUNDAY I.

ON A HABIT OF ATTENTION.

THOUGH there are many things, my dear, of which at present you are ignorant; yet you well know, that knowledge is only to be acquired by a desire to be informed; and if you do not endeavour to *listen* to those instructions which you receive either at church or at home, you certainly must lose the benefit of

improvement, and will ſtill continue in a ſtate of ignorance.

THOUGH, at preſent, you are incapable of underſtanding *every* thing that you may hear, yet this ability is not to be acquired by neglect: while you ſpend your time in play, and employ your thoughts on toys and trifles, ſuch parts of a diſcourſe as might be ſuited to your capacity, and calculated to enlighten your mind, will be paſſed over with equal negligence as the reſt.

YOUNG as you are, you have been inſtructed, that there is a God who obſerves all your actions; you have been taught your duty to him as your Creator and Preſerver: you know likewiſe what are your obligations to your fellow creatures; and that a regard to a right conduct, and the practice of virtue, is a duty that you owe to *yourſelf*.—It is a *part* therefore of the performance of thoſe duties, to do all in your power to improve in knowledge; to learn every day more and more in what thoſe obligations conſiſt; what are the ſins you ſhould particularly endeavour to avoid, and the virtues you are moſt

called upon to practise. As you advance in years your opportunities of usefulness will be increased: but even at *present* you have *some* things incumbent upon you to observe; and the Almighty will be as watchful over *your* conduct, as over those who are your superiors in age.

EVERY state, my dear, has its particular duties to fulfil. To acquire a clear idea of what God expects from you at *this* period of your life, is what I now mean particularly to recommend; and to this end, you must listen with a design of improving, by the advice of your older friends. You must not allow yourself to be impatient when they reprove, or negligent when they would instruct you; nor must you on any account, if you design to render your behaviour pleasing to the Deity, *forget* the serious admonitions you receive; since in that case, you will resemble those hearers whom our Saviour describes in one of his parables, as receiving the word into stony ground, or into a barren soil, where, for want of earth, the seed which

was ſown withered away. The meaning of which is, that what you may learn from reading, or your friends may be ſo kind as to teach you, will be of no uſe, unleſs you reſolve to act as you are deſired. A determined *obedience* to thoſe inſtructions is therefore evidently your preſent duty; ſince, though you may have ſufficient ſenſe to comprehend what you are taught, it will never "ſpring up," or bring the fruits of virtue to perfection, unleſs it be ſown in *good ground:*—unleſs you reflect ſo ſeriouſly on the conſequence of your actions, as to reſolve to obſerve the precepts of religion, and regulate your life by the directions of truth.

WHAT is above your comprehenſion, entreat your parents to explain; and if you *endeavour* to diſcover the ſenſe of any author you may read, or any diſcourſe you may attend to, you will find, that your abilities will be improved; and what might appear difficult to you upon a ſlight peruſal, or a tranſient thought, will be more clearly underſtood upon mature reflection, and a ſerious and frequent conſideration of the ſubject.—But as your mind is at pre-

ſent too volatile to expect a continued attention, I ſhall conclude my preſent exhortation with the hope, that as the contents of this little work are ſuch as are highly intereſting, and of the utmoſt importance, you will favor them with a candid and an *attentive* peruſal.

SUNDAY II.

ON TRUTH.

THE neceſſity of eſtabliſhing a character for veracity is ſo obvious, that ~~I ſhall perhaps rather offend you, by ſuppoſing~~ there is any need to recommend it. But as ~~young~~ perſons, ~~in particular,~~ are ſometimes drawn into error by ſurpriſe, ~~I would warn you, my dear, to be upon your guard;~~ as *one* deviation will be attended with laſting conſequences of evil.

THE fear of preſent ſhame, is, in general, a ſtrong incentive to deceit: and to hide the neglect of a duty, or excuſe the commiſſion of an error, the aggravated guilt of a *lie* is added to the tranſgreſſion. When an untruth is detected (as one time or other it will be) the character of ſincerity is always ſuſpected. In vain may you promiſe amendment, or aſſure your friends

of your repentance; the bond of reliance is broken; for who can give credit to the word of a *liar?* Thoſe who have *once* deceived us, we are apt in future to treat with contempt. All confidence in them is aboliſhed, till by a *long* and *ſteady* adherence to *truth*, they have retrieved their loſt honor, and engaged us to renew our dependance upon them.

EVERY deviation from a known duty is dangerous; and to admit the *appearance* of evil, is, to verge toward the commiſſion of a crime. Temptations to deny the truth may every day occur; and unleſs you reſolutely determine to abide any inconvenience rather than forfeit your veracity, you will certainly be enſnared into the commiſſion of this dangerous ſin. In the fifth chapter of the ſecond book of Kings, a ſtriking hiſtory is recorded of the lie which *Gehazi*, the ſervant of the prophet *Eliſha*, told his maſter concerning the gifts which he had received from *Naaman*, a noble *Syrian*, who had come to *Samaria*, to be healed by him of the leproſy, a ſore and diſagreeable diſorder with which he had been long afflicted. This nobleman had been

informed by a little maid, whom the *Syrians* had taken captive in their wars with the children of *Israel*, that there was in her country, a prophet, who God had endued with power to heal diſeaſes: to him ſhe adviſed her maſter to apply for relief. The noble *Naaman* determined to try the experiment, and with a train of followers befitting his rank, and a recommendation from the King his maſter, ſet forward to make the attempt. When he arrived at *Samaria* he went immediately to the monarch of *Iſrael*, to whom his letter was addreſſed, and implored his aſſiſtance for his recovery. *Jehoram*, who reigned at that time, was exceedingly diſturbed at the meſſage, and imagined that the King of *Aſſyria*, with whom he was frequently at war, ſought, by a requeſt which it was out of his power to comply with, to make a pretence of quarrel; and accordingly rent his cloaths as a mark of his ſorrow on the occaſion.

Eliſha, as ſoon as this action was told him, ſent to *Jehoram*, with an enquiry to know why he had been ſo haſty and diſcontented? and to deſire that *Naaman* might be ſent to him, and

he ſhould *know* that there was a prophet in *Iſrael;* who, by the aſſiſtance of God, could effect the difficult cure, which *Benhadad* had entreated the king to accompliſh. In conſequence of this meſſage *Naaman* was diſmiſſed to *Eliſha*, who ſent him word by his ſervant to go and waſh ſeven times in *Jordan*, (one of the rivers of *Samaria,)* and he ſhould be perfectly healed. The *Syrian* nobleman, who thought his rank, and the ſplendor of his equipage claimed a greater degree of reſpect, was offended that the prophet did not invite him into his houſe, put his hand on the place, and command a cure: and very fooliſhly argued, that the remedy preſcribed was ſo *ſimple* that he imagined no benefit would ariſe from obeying it; that *Abana* and *Pharpar*, rivers of *Damaſcus* (his own city) were larger and better than all the waters of *Iſrael;* and therefore he might as well waſh in them and be clean; and with this angry and diſſatisfied diſpoſition, would have left the city without trying the effect of the prophet's advice. But his attendants, with more reaſon, repreſented to him, that as he had taken the journey in expectation of relief, he had better *try* the efficacy of the waters which

were recommended, and that if he had been ordered ſome great and expenſive mean, difficult to procure, and unpleaſing in the application, he would, without heſitation, have joyfully complied; and it was certainly much more eaſy, when he was only told to waſh and be clean. Convinced by theſe juſt and judicious arguments, he ſubmitted to the method propoſed, and to his aſtoniſhment and ſatisfaction, found himſelf immediately reſtored to health.

WITH the warmeſt ſentiments of gratitude he then returns to the prophet, acknowledges himſelf a convert to the belief of the true God, and offers ſome rich preſents as a return to *Eliſha*, for the obligation, which by his means he had received. Theſe, however, were generouſly refuſed; and *Naaman*, after preſſing his acceptance of the gift, ſet *forward*, with a thankful heart, on his return.

BUT *Gehazi*, who waited on the prophet, and whoſe avarice repined at the benevolence of his maſter, determined that the *Syrian* ſhould not ſo eaſily eſcape. He ran after the carriage, there-

fore, and being perceived by the grateful nobleman, he immediately ſtopped to receive his meſſage, with an affectionate enquiry whether his maſter was well? *Gehazi*, with a ready falſhood, replied, that no accident had happened; but that two young men of the ſons of the prophets having unexpectedly arrived from Mount *Ephraim*, his maſter had ſent him to beg for them, a talent of ſilver and two changes of raiment. This *Naaman* readily complies with, and deſires his acceptance of *two* talents of ſilver, which were bound in two bags with the garments, and carried by his ſervant, before the treacherous *Gehazi*, who beſtowed, that is, hid them in the houſe, and then returned to wait upon *Eliſha*. The prophet, who was conſcious of the iniquity of his ſervant, enquired where he had been? To which, with the moſt audacious appearance of innocence, he anſwered, "Thy ſervant went no whither." Shocked at the wickedneſs of this denial, the prophet at once confounds and puniſhes his guilt by this anſwer. "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to

receive garments, and poſſeſſions? Therefore the leproſy of *Naaman* ſhall cleave unto thee and to thy ſeed for ever. And he went out from his preſence," adds the hiſtorian, "a leper as white as ſnow."

THIS ſtory is an example, among many, of one fault being the occaſion of another; and ſhould teach you at all times to avoid doing a wrong action; ſince there is no certainty where the guilt or the evil may ſtop. When *Gehazi* firſt formed the covetous plan of wiſhing for ſome of the gifts which his maſter had rejected, he could find no way to accompliſh his deſire, but by the invention of a lie: and when, by the undeſerved confidence of the *Syrian* Lord, he had procured the riches which he ſolicited, the temptation became ſtill greater to conceal it from his maſter by a ſecond falſhood.

BUT remember, my good young friend, whatever may be your inclination to deceive, or however neceſſary it may appear for your intereſt to diſguiſe the truth, that although there is no *prophet* to diſcover your guilt, yet the ſame

God, who endued *Elisha* with that power, is ever present to observe and to punish your wickedness. Think therefore with yourself, when you are incited to deviate from the truth, that although you may escape detection from your friends, or those with whom you are connected, yet the awful question may be applied to you, "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot?" That is, that however secret the lie may appear to be, however unsuspected you may at present escape; yet God, who is at all times the witness of every action, and is acquainted with every thought, will certainly, unless you sincerely repent, punish your crimes hereafter.

BEFORE the coming of *Christ*, God acted as the peculiar Governor of the *Jewish* nation: and as a future state was not then so clearly revealed, their laws were suited to the nature of their situation at that time. Hence you will find, that temporal punishments were assigned, and temporal rewards proposed, to engage their obedience: such as, that God would bless them

and their posterity with health and long life; with a fruitful land; with peace and plenty; if they behaved according to his commands: but if they acted wickedly, then he would destroy them; would give them to their enemies for slaves; would make them miserable, through ill health; and send the horrors of famine upon them; so that they should have nothing to eat. And therefore the punishment of *Gehazi*, in the present instance, is, that he and his children, if ever he had any, should suffer with the sore and shocking disorder of a leprosy; as a warning to others, not to be guilty of the like crimes. And the reason that this seemingly severe chastisement was to be continued to his children, might be; that when in after times people enquired, *why* this disorder afflicted all the race of *Gehazi?* they might be informed, that one of their progenitors had offended God by the wickedness of lying; and hence be taught the importance of an adherence to truth, and how unpleasing a contrary conduct is to the Divine Governor of the world.

As every example and every precept in the

Scriptures is written for your instruction, you should seriously consider, that if God so severely punished *Gehazi*, who had never had the blessing of that purer revelation, which *Christ* came into the world to make known; you must not expect that he will be less displeased with you, although he may not think proper to punish you immediately. Nor is this sin confined to such instances as seem to be important in themselves: the crime may be aggravated indeed by circumstances; but if it be occasioned by an accident the most trifling, still as an untruth it is extremely wicked, and the commission will undoubtedly meet its deserved condemnation.

WILL you, therefore, ever be persuaded to lose the approbation of your friends, the satisfaction of an approving conscience, and above all, do a deed which will displease the Almighty, to save yourself from a present inconvenience, or to acquire a present benefit? If you reflect seriously upon the subject, can any thing be worth such a sacrifice? Will any gratification recompence you for the miserable consciousness of

having ſwerved from your duty in this inſtance; for the dread of detection; the fear of ſhame; and, if diſcovered, the certain loſs of your honor and reputation? Could you bear to have your fidelity liable to ſuſpicion? and not to obtain the credit of belief in other affairs, where you might be more ſincere! Recollect theſe arguments then, when you are tempted to tranſgreſs; and beg of God to fortify your mind with ſtrength to reſiſt temptation.

BE aſſured, that if you have committed an error, the moſt noble reparation will be to acknowledge it. No one is abſolutely perfect; but it is deſpicable and mean to deny a fault, and hide a failing, at the expence of truth. The motive, if it be to ſave your reputation, is highly erroneous; ſince honeſty, upon all occaſions, is the only true foundation of laſting reſpect. Other offences may meet with more compaſſion and excuſe; but a *liar* will always be branded with infamy, and his character meet with deteſtation and contempt.

SUNDAY III.

ON READING THE SCRIPTURES.

IF you read the Bible without attention, think it a hardſhip, and regard it as a taſk, you will find no delight, nor gain any improvement from the ſtudy of it. Conſider that it is the book which you ſhould conſtantly peruſe, to teach you your duty to God, and to inſtruct you in what he has commanded and what forbidden to be done.

THE ſame laws which he enjoined to the *Jews*, he requires *now* of *Chriſtians*, except thoſe which were of a ceremonious ſort; ſuch as their ſacrifices, their going up to *Jeruſalem*, and others of the like kind, which your parents will teach you to diſtinguiſh. But the Ten Commandments remain in the ſame force; and God will be as much diſpleaſed with thoſe who diſ-

obey them *now*, as when they were firſt given to *Moſes* at *Mount Sinai*. When therefore you take the name of God in vain, either by ſwearing, or by what is too commonly practiſed by thoſe who eſteem themſelves thoughtful and religious, by repeating the words of *Lord*, *God*, or *Chriſt*; and calling upon their Maker as an exclamation, which they uſe without reflection, upon every trifling occaſion: this is to break the third commandment.—Nor is an ill-tempered ſullenneſs, or inſolent rudeneſs to your parents, when they kindly offer you their advice, or endeavour to inſtruct you, leſs a breach of the fifth.

To take what is not your own, or to pilfer from your companions any thing which belongs to them, becauſe it ſuits your inclination; will certainly come under the guilt of *ſtealing*. For wickedneſs is as much deſerving of condemnation, if exerciſed in circumſtances which are indifferent in themſelves, as when excited by more powerful temptations; ſince it is the *intention* of the *mind* which conſtitutes the *guilt* of an action: and if you take a toy or a trinket, *knowing* it to belong to another, you are certainly guilty

of a breach of that commandment which ordains, "Thou ſhalt not ſteal."

To deſire the poſſeſſions of your neighbours in an undue degree; to wiſh for their cloaths, their money, or any thing which they poſſeſs, ſo as to be diſſatisfied with your own; is a violation of that law which forbids you to covet: and ſo of the reſt, which are not leſs binding for having been long delivered; but will ever remain of eternal force and obligation.

THAT God who was the ruler and governor of the *Iſraelites*, though he does not now ſo viſibly lead his people by the fiery pillar which gave light to them, but was a cloud of darkneſs to their enemies, is ſtill the *ſame* God; is equally watchful over the *Chriſtians*; obſerves their obedience with approbation, and is preſent to every ſecret thought of the moſt youthful of his children. He beholds every ſtruggle between duty and inclination, and will reward them for every ſacrifice which they make to virtue.

WHEN they are excited by the examples

which were recorded for their instruction, to do well, and to imitate what is right; they may be certain, though observed by no earthly eye, "that they shall in no wise lose their reward; for their Father who seeth in secret, himself will reward them openly."

WHEN, therefore, you are permitted to read the Scriptures, endeavour to attend seriously to them: and what you do not understand, desire some of your older friends to explain. Remember what they tell you, and think of it when you meet with the same passages again. This will make you find greater pleasure in the employment; for it is tiresome to peruse any thing which we do not comprehend.

BUT, perhaps, you will be apt to imagine, that the commands of the Almighty are not designed to affect *you*: that your *youth* will excuse you from obeying them; and therefore, that it is of little consequence to take such a degree of trouble. In this opinion you will be much mistaken. It is necessary to *know* your duty before you can *practise* it; and if you take no pains to

enquire what God expects from you; I am afraid you will take ſtill leſs, to *do* what he commands.

Samuel, though but a child, was favored by the Lord, with a revelation of what was to befal the family of *Eli*; for it is the *goodneſs* of the *heart* that will be regarded by God, and not the *age* of thoſe who pray to him. He hath enjoined you to ſeek him early in the days of your youth; and therefore you need never be diſcouraged with the idea that, as a *child*, you are but of little conſequence; for God watcheth over the thoughts of every infant mind, and is well pleaſed when he beholds the earneſt endeavours of the *leaſt* of his creatures to be *good*, and to deſerve his favor.

You are not to expect that your piety will make you diſtinguiſhed in the ſame manner as *Samuel*, becauſe he was deſigned to be a prophet; and no one, ſince the death of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, have *that* gift beſtowed upon them. But this inſtance may convince you, that the favor of God, and his obſervance of human actions, is not confined to any particular age, but

that all are equally the care of his providence, and ſhare alike in his notice.

IF, then, you endeavour to learn your duty, and are reſolved to practiſe it, young as you are, you may be capable of doing *much* good in the world. Your acquaintance will be incited from your example, to imitate what they will find every one ready to recommend. Your parents will be made happy by the pleaſure of ſeeing you ſuch as they wiſh you to become; and will be thankful to God for the bleſſing of ſuch a good child. They will be always ready to truſt your promiſes, becauſe they know, that when *they* are abſent you will conſider yourſelf as in *God*'s preſence; and therefore will not do any thing that is wrong, while you remember that he is the awful witneſs of your actions. And ſhall you not rejoice, my dear, to gain the confidence of thoſe friends whom you love, and who are ſo kind and ſo attentive to you?

I am ſure this conſideration will have weight with every worthy mind; and a good child muſt rejoice to ſee the delight of an affectionate fa-

ther, when he ſurveys with pleaſure the improvements of his beloved offſpring; or the raptures of a tender mother, when ſhe perceives any new inſtance of virtue in the object of her fondeſt regard.

THE *happineſs* of parents, my young friend, is ſo connected with the *goodneſs* of their children, that if they are undutiful, negligent, and wicked, it muſt give ſuch affliction and trouble, as no other comforts can counterbalance. Can you bear the thought of making *them* unhappy, whoſe whole aim in life is to promote *your* felicity? Can you receive with ſullenneſs and ill-humour that advice which is deſigned entirely for your good? Recollect how anxiouſly they endeavour to provide for all your wants: to their kindneſs you are indebted for your food, your cloathing, and every convenience which you enjoy. And though this care and attention is *their* duty; to reſpect, to love, to reverence, and obey them is no leſs *yours;* and what God will *as* undoubtedly expect from you.

To be obedient to your parents, is one of

the firſt obligations which you can perform in life; and is the only return in your power to make for thoſe continual favors which you daily receive. "Honor then thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

SUNDAY IV.

ON SOCIAL DUTY.

WHEN God made the world, his wiſdom gave to mankind a power of ſpeech, reaſon, and reflection, which he beſtowed on no other creature; and, as human nature is ſubject to many wants, and is too weak *ſingly* to provide for itſelf, the Almighty has ordained that we ſhould live together; and that numbers, by helping each other, ſhould procure thoſe conveniences which no man *alone* could obtain.

THIS union, my dear, is called a ſtate of ſociety; and every child who is born is termed a member, or one of that ſociety. That is, another addition to the number of people in the world: and every perſon has ſome duties to perform, which are known by the name of

ſocial duties; becauſe if it were poſſible for you to live quite alone, thoſe duties would not be exerted. For, had you not parents, you could not obey them; had you not brothers or ſiſters, you could not love them; had you not friends, or inſtructors, you could not be thankful and attentive to them; and if you knew no perſons who were poor and wretched, you could not be kind and charitable.

WHILE you are young it becomes you to be dutiful to your ſuperiors; and whatever is the ſtation in which Providence has thought fit to place you, to endeavour, by every kind attention in your power to promote the happineſs of thoſe connected with you. Each inſtance, therefore, of ſullenneſs when you are reproved, of anger when diſappointed, and petulance and ill-humour when you meet with contradiction, is a certain failure in your duty as a ſocial being. Whenever you are tempted to offend in this reſpect, recollect that your conduct is noticed by a higher power than thoſe who gave you offence; that moſt probably the advice which you diſapprove, is entirely deſigned to

promote your welfare; that though ſuch admonitions may be wounding to your pride, the ſure mark of a noble mind is to improve by every hint which is afforded to guide it through life: and be aſſured, the time *will come* when experience will alter your preſent opinions, and convince you of thoſe errors of which you now refuſe to be corrected.

BUT even admitting that your *friends* ſhould be to blame, allowing that they ſhould treat you with ſeverity, or miſtake your motive, and blame you with ill-nature: in ſuch a caſe you muſt conſole yourſelf with the reflection, that however *others* may provoke you, *you* will be calm, and govern your temper; and that ſuch a conduct will inſure to you the approbation of that God, whom no outward appearance can deceive, and no weakneſs miſlead; but that his goodneſs will recompence every attempt which is made, and aſſiſt every endeavour to excel in virtue. From the faults of others you ſhould endeavour to correct your own; and while you ſuffer unmerited ill-humour, remember the

ſame bad qualities will produce equal abhorrence in yourſelf.

EVERY individual, be his rank in life ever ſo obſcure, can at the moſt early age contribute, by his good behaviour, to the felicity of thoſe about him; and to eaſe the burden of care, and give aſſiſtance to each other, is to promote that wiſe and benevolent deſign which our Maker deſigned in the creation of man.

As this is a ſtate of trial, you will meet with no character without imperfection; and therefore when you diſcover any failings in thoſe who have the care of your education, you are not to retort with inſolence upon them, and ſay, "they require thoſe virtues from you, which they themſelves fail to practiſe." For though undoubtedly, in every inſtance, the teacher ought to ſet an example of excellence to the pupil; yet ſuch is human weakneſs, that thoſe whoſe better knowledge calls for ſuperior virtue, thoſe whom we may expect to act nobly upon every occaſion, will ſometimes unhappily diſappoint our expectations, and behave in ſuch a manner

as to forfeit, in that inſtance, the eſteem of their friends, and incur their own reproach.

BUT in ſuch a ſituation, if you are convinced that thoſe whom you are bound to obey, have not kept in mind the precepts which they have taught you; remember that perhaps there may be *many* reaſons to plead in their excuſe. That it may be, when young, they were not bleſſed with thoſe high advantages of inſtruction and improvement which you enjoy: or that if they were ſo favored, they might *then* diſregard what they *now* find to their coſt they have reaſon to lament their neglect of.

MAKE uſe, therefore, of *their* experience to act more wiſely; but never regard it as any excuſe for errors in yourſelf, much leſs that it gives you a right to be ſaucy and irreverent in your behaviour. What, upon ſerious reflection, they adviſe you to obſerve, however you may fancy they deviate from it themſelves, you may be certain is for your good; and you ſhould conſider, that as they are older,

and do not, it is moſt probable, tell you all the motives for their actions; ſo thoſe inſtances which to you may appear blameable, would perhaps, were it proper to acquaint you with the reaſons of their conduct, fully clear them from your cenſure.

SUNDAY V.

ON BROTHERLY LOVE.

THE near connection which ſubſiſts between children of the ſame family ſhould incite them to mutual kindneſs; and yet it is too often obſerved in life, that thoſe who are moſt nearly united by intereſt and duty, are the leaſt engaged by friendſhip and affection. The moſt trifling circumſtances often produce events of high importance; and if you would perform your ſocial duties aright, if you mean to act up to the high character of a *chriſtian*, you muſt remember, that it is neceſſary to keep a conſtant guard over your temper, and to be ſtrictly attentive to every occurrence of domeſtic life. If your relations are kind and obliging, it will be highly ungrateful to impoſe upon their goodneſs, or take any unfair advantage of their tenderneſs. For ſurely nothing can be more

ungenerous than to behave ill to thoſe who are *meek*, becauſe you know they will not *reſent* it.

LET not thoſe who through tenderneſs bear with your faults, have, for *that reaſon*, the more faults to bear with. That is a mean diſpoſition which will only be governed by fear or by reſentment. A noble mind will endeavour to promote the happineſs of all around it; and why ſhould you ſuffer the captiouſneſs of ill-humour to deſtroy your own ſerenity, and diſturb the peace of your neareſt and beſt friends? If God has done ſo much to promote the good of mankind, ſurely he will puniſh thoſe who oppoſe his benevolent deſigns, by their perverſe diſpoſitions.

"LET brotherly love then continue undiſturbed;" and never do, or ſay any thing with a deſign of giving pain to thoſe with whom you are. A *word*, or a *look* of unkindneſs, may cauſe much uneaſineſs to a brother or ſiſter; remember, therefore, the charitable rule by which our Saviour enjoins *his* diſciples to proceed, and do to *them* as you, in

the like ſituation, would wiſh they ſhould act by *you.*

IN this life, numberleſs troubles will unavoidably ariſe; but he who is willing to take offence at trifles, or inconſiderately give pain to others, will add greatly to the burden of ſorrow, and muſt expect to ſuffer the miſeries which his conduct deſerves.

How ſeverely did the envious and unkind brethren of the innocent *Joſeph* lament their barbarous behaviour! And though God may not at the preſent moment appear to inflict his vengeance on thoſe who are petulant and ill-tempered; yet be aſſured that he *notices* every *paſſionate expreſſion*, that he ſees every act of malignity and ſpite; and that the *envious*, the *ſullen*, the *moroſe* child will not eſcape unpuniſhed. He alone can be happy in this world, he alone will be bleſſed in a future ſtate, who endeavours to be *good tempered.* "Bleſſed are the *merciful*, for they ſhall obtain *mercy*. Bleſſed are the *peace-makers*, for they ſhall be called the children of God." Like their Almighty Father they delight to pro-

mote happineſs around them; and in their narrow ſphere, in the ſmall circle of their own family, among their brothers and ſiſters, their relations, or acquaintance, to diffuſe and excite a ſpirit of kindneſs and affection.

THE ſweet influence, my young readers, be aſſured, will ſpread from heart to heart: others will catch a habit of compliance from you; and your example will rouſe them to a ſenſe of emulation, and to a generous deſire not to be outdone in good nature. Let then your conteſt be, *not* who ſhall *overcome* in a diſpute; but who ſhall firſt *yield* to the other, and ſet the firſt example of ſelf-denial.

FROM the moment of your riſing till you lie down again to repoſe, you will conſtantly meet with ſome opportunity to ſhew your good humour, or exerciſe your peeviſh and vexatious talents. As I have before told you, as the Scriptures continually remind you, *every* action is obſerved by God; for every *word* we muſt, at the day of judgment, give account: remember, therefore, how important an object it is to be kind,

complying, obliging, civil; not when others are crofs or peevifh, " rendering them railing (that is, ill-tempered language) for railing, nor evil for evil; but contrariwife, bleffing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye fhould inherit a bleffing." Which is intended to inftruct you, that as you are called to the bleffings of the *Chriftian* covenant, fo you fhould act worthy of that profeffion; and though fuch behaviour as railing, or doing evil, may be, in fome meafure, excufeable in thofe who are ignorant and uninftructed, yet that *Chriftians* who have read the Gofpel, and been taught by the precepts and example of *Chrift*, can plead no excufe for their bad behaviour; that it is a part of their engagement " to love one another;" without obferving which, they cannot hope for the privileges or bleffing of the new, or *Chriftian* covenant; " for hereby" fays our Saviour, " fhall all men know that ye are my difciples, if ye have love one toward another:" and though this was intended in a more extenfive fenfe, to take in every one we either *know* or *hear* of, yet furely it is in a peculiar manner needful toward thofe with whom we *live;* and therefore whofe happinefs is fo

much more nearly concerned in our good or bad behaviour.

TAKE care then, my young friend, how you ſuffer yourſelf to be fretful and diſcontented; and becauſe you have the *power* to be *ill-natured*, becauſe you can teaze others with impunity, therefore think you have a *right* ſo to do. Be aſſured, that every act, however trifling, which is deſigned to provoke your companions, will be the cauſe of great unhappineſs to yourſelf. While on the contrary, every exertion of kindneſs, civility, and good humour, will afford you ſuch inward ſatiſfaction, in the approbation of an approving conſcience, as will be found one of the higheſt enjoyments which this world can beſtow.

SUNDAY VI.

ON ENVY.

THERE is nothing more oppofite to brotherly love than the indulgence of a difpofition to envy. Where this evil paffion once takes poffeffion of the mind, it deftroys the benevolent influence of good-nature, and renders thofe who indulge it a torment to others, and a mifery to themfelves.

ENVY arifes from a confciousnefs of wanting either that genius, or thofe talents, which are the poffeffion of another. Inftead of exciting us to imitate what we think is agreeable, it inclines us to depreciate or undervalue their goodnefs or accomplifhments. But beware, my young reader, how you give the leaft indulgence to this hateful difpofition; examine your own

heart impartially, lest it should steal upon you undiscovered.

WHEN you hear any of your relations or companions praised for their improvements, if you feel a dislike to the subject, and are unwilling to join in their commendation, be assured that it proceeds from *envy*. Or, if you try to discover their failings, with a view to mention them the next time you hear them admired: if you find a desire to say, to be sure, they are *good*, in *this* instance; but in *that* they are *worse* than myself; in *some* particulars they excel, but in *others* are very defective: if this be what you are inclined to say, or to think, recollect that these are the suggestions of *envy;* such feelings the beginning of temptation; and resolve to be more generous for the future. Remember, that if the merit of others gives you pain, it is because you are inferior to them; and instead of being *displeased* at their goodness, resolve to become *like* them.

IF, for instance, your companion be commended for sweetness of temper, reflect that it

is in your own power to become equally amiable. Determine the next time you are vexed, provoked, or disappointed, to bear it with patience and good humour. Endeavour to *deserve* equal praise, and you will most probably meet with it. But suppose, from a difference in circumstances, or situation, *that* should not happen to be the case, still will you have a higher consolation to reward you. God Almighty, the great Father and watchful Observer of all his creatures, will be pleased with your endeavours to do your duty; and his favor will be a better recompence than any other advantage you could obtain. You will likewise secure your own happiness, by avoiding that train of disagreeable reflections which ever attend on an envious disposition.

THOSE whom we *envy* we cannot *love*; we rejoice at any accident which interrupts their prosperity; and it gives us pleasure to see them guilty of such failings as may disgrace their good qualities. What a shocking, what a miserable temper! yet such is its real representation.

To perceive the hateful appearance of vice, you muſt ſurvey it in others, and remember what you think diſguſting in *them*, will be equally wicked in *yourſelf*. *David* was conſcious how blameable it was to take the poor man's lamb; though without remorſe he ſent for the wife of *Uriah* when he had cauſed her huſband to be ſlain, by expoſing him to the ſword of the children of *Ammon*.

GOD is the witneſs of every *intention*. If you join in praiſing others, that you may have a better opportunity to expoſe their failings; he will puniſh your hypocriſy with ſevere vengeance. There is a meanneſs in *envy*, which checks the exertion of every noble affection. It is the vice of little minds which grudges merit its deſerved reward, and repines that any one is happy but itſelf. Endeavour to riſe above its low ſuggeſtions; remember that *others* being great, generous, or accompliſhed, does not argue that *you* may not have the ſame good qualities. Few perſons excel in *every* thing: all may, if they pleaſe, in *ſomething*. Cultivate your own talents with care; but he

contented to let others have their ſhare of applauſe.

IF God has beſtowed upon you any perſonal beauty, be thankful for the gift; but conſider it is a dangerous bleſſing. If it raiſe your vanity, the end is defeated for which it was lent you. The advantages of perſon are no further valuable than as they render you more pleaſing to others; but if they excite a ſpirit of contention, affectation, and pride, they will make you deſpicable in the eyes of perſons of real ſenſe, and prove a misfortune rather than a happineſs. On the other hand, ſhould it be your lot to be deformed, disfigured, or diſagreeable, let it not raiſe your *envy* at the graces which others may poſſeſs: do not be uneaſy upon the ſubject; but conſider that theſe are trifling diſtinctions; that to be *virtuous* and *amiable* is the only thing of importance. God knows beſt what is proper for all his creatures; and if therefore he has ſeen it right to deny you the advantage of a comely perſon, be aſſured, that there are wiſe reaſons why you ſhould

be contented, and not wish for any thing that is withheld from you.

PERHAPS, had you been possessed of the beauty you so much desire, it would have made you vain and disagreeable; would have engaged too much of your thoughts, your time, and attention: *vice* only will make you really deformed.

IF you are treated unkindly, or ridiculed by your companions, it reflects dishonor upon *them*, not discredit upon *you*. Where misfortunes of this kind are not owing to your own fault, never regard them as any disgrace. *Virtue*, not *beauty*, is what God will regard, and what the good will esteem. Be kind, therefore to others: be good tempered, and endeavour to do every thing, to the best of your abilities, but never envy what your companions possess.

As this life is only a state of trial, God has not thought fit to bestow his gifts to all in equal proportion. But whatever may be your lot, he expects that you should be contented,

and not repine becauſe *others* appear to have more advantages. Nay, he has thought fit to enjoin us to this virtue by an abſolute command. "Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his ſervant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor *any* thing that is his."

IT is wrong to wiſh for the goods of fortune, or to deſire a change of ſituation; ſince no one can tell the ſecret cares which another may experience, and the very perſon whom you regard with the higheſt degree of envy may be much more unhappy than yourſelf.

A FINE houſe, an elegant equipage, faſhionable cloaths, and a beautiful perſon, do not any of them, or altogether, beſtow *happineſs*: and the pooreſt child who is humble, gentle, willing to be taught, and does the beſt it can to perform its duty, will be found to enjoy pleaſures which *riches* cannot give; and ſuch as can only reſult from a *good heart*.

BE ſincere, therefore, in your words, gene-

rous, open-hearted, kind to your equals, obedient to your ſuperiors; preſerve a conſtant ſenſe of God upon your mind, and act ſo as to merit his approbation; then will you be above the meanneſs of *envy*, you will have no temptation to ſuch a hateful paſſion, and you will obtain as much real felicity as can be enjoyed in this world.

SUNDAY VII.

ON PRIDE.

THIS vice has been often ſaid to be the fault of little minds. The meaning of which is, that people of real ſenſe and merit, eſteem every thing according to its worth; and therefore conſider riches, beauty, or rank, as accidental advantages, which can reflect no honor on the poſſeſſor.

EVERY bleſſing which we enjoy is derived from infinite goodneſs; they ſhould always engage our *gratitude*, but never excite our *pride*. When we compare the ſituation, talents, or enjoyments of others with our own, the greater ſatisfaction we receive, the more ardent ſhould be our thankfulneſs.

THAT we are ſuperior to our neighbour, is no merit in *us*, but encreaſes our obligation to

that God who has so liberally endowed us with his gifts. Prosperity is by no mean a state of security. Innumerable dangers attend on those whose circumstances are exalted: they are too often inclined to forget their duty, to grow fond of pleasure, and to esteem dress, shew, and ostentation, beyond the noblest virtues of the heart. But it is impossible to describe the meanness and guilt of such a conduct.

SUPPOSE yourself to be dressed by the hand of elegance, and that your person is so agreeably formed as to inspire pleasure in every beholder; nay, allow that you have all those outward graces which the polish of refined manners, and a good education can bestow; still are not these advantages any just foundation for pride. Though you may excel your companions in dancing, in music, in painting, or in any, or all of those accomplishments in which it is praise-worthy to succeed; yet a haughty consciousness of superiority, and a disdain of those who have been less fortunate, or less capable of exertion, will spoil the fair fruit of these *otherwise* delightful

blossoms, and render you the object of abhorrence and contempt.

VIRTUE is the one thing needful. We may be careful and troubled about many things, but that is the essential part. Every perfection, every distinction which has not that for its support, will be of no avail when death shall mix your body with the common dust, and your soul shall return to the God who gave it.

ENDEAVOUR therefore now to anticipate, by reflection, that period which will certainly arrive. Recollect when you display your finery to others, to excite their envy, or inspire their reverence, that true respect is the tribute paid to real merit alone: and however you may raise the stare of astonishment, or cause the sigh of vexation by this gratification of your pride; yet it is only in the idea of the weak and unreflecting, that you will have even this poor kind of homage paid to your vanity.

IF there is *one* who, like *Mordecai*, does not seem to observe your fancied superiority, you

will ſuffer all the pangs of the ambitious *Haman*. Every comfort of life will be diſregarded; and each former ſatisfaction afford no pleaſure, while you conſider this vexation, as "*Mordecai* the *Jew* ſitting in the king's gate."

PRIDE is ever an enemy to inſtruction; it will incline you to fancy your judgment better informed than your teachers; and, in conſequence, render you angry and petulant at inſtruction, and quite impatient at reproof. "Surely *I* ſhould know beſt," is the language of the proud upon every occaſion. Thus do they exclude the poſſibility of improvement, and ſit down obſtinate in ignorance, and vain of error.

THE vice of which we are now ſpeaking is deteſtable at *every* age; but is more particularly diſguſting in *youth*, where the want of experience muſt add to the weakneſs of folly, and render preſumption more glaring. Subdue then, with the utmoſt vigilance, the firſt approaches of this dangerous vice; it will increaſe in its ſtrength by imperceptible degrees. Apply ſeriouſly to your Heavenly Father for

assistance; be resolute and watchful over this spiritual enemy.

WHEN you find the emotions of resentment arise on being told of your fault; when you are angry with the reproving friend, and still more, when you determine not to heed the kind reprehension; then, my young friend, it is time to tremble for your virtue. Do not encourage the wrong inclination. Do not say then censure is unjust, nor seek to vindicate your error with any plausible pretext. Excuses may deceive others; and what is worse, may deceive yourself. But, my dear child, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Examine yourself seriously, perhaps you have been to blame; do not be too hasty in your decision; self-love is a terrible deceiver. Your parents are better judges of your conduct; they hear with less prejudiced ears; they see with more impartial eyes, and yet feel that anxiety for your character, which will incline them to make every proper allowance when they think it necessary to censure your conduct.

A NOBLE mind is never above the acknowledgment of a fault; candidly own that you have erred, and resolve upon future amendment. This in every case is the best possible satisfaction; the path of humility will conduct you to perfection; the obstinacy of pride must render you unworthy of esteem. Its intention is self-defeated; it seeks respect, but involves itself in disgrace. Pride aims at superiority, and claims commendation as its due; but it is subject to continual disappointment; as every one will delight to mortify those who have too high an opinion of their own consequence.

REMEMBER at all times "that human excellence is but comparative;" and that however exalted you may fancy your rank, your fortune, or your acquirements, there are others, though unknowu, or unacknowledged by your vanity, "who excel you as much as you fancy you excel the meanest."

SUNDAY VIII.

ON DECEIT.

MANY a perſon, whoſe conſcience would be ſhocked by abſolutely denying the *truth*, and affirming what they knew to be a *lie*; will yet allow in themſelves a habit of *deceit*, without remorſe or uneaſineſs.

EVERY crime is undoubtedly capable of aggravation, and the offender may be rendered more or leſs guilty from the attending circumſtances. If falſhood is employed to injure a neighbour's reputation, to engage a companion to the commiſſion of evil, or to deprive another of his juſt right, it is rendered ſtill more inexcuſable. But do not be deceived by appearances: *deceit* is *forbidden*; and though the motive which inſpires it may be generous, there is no intention that can ſanctify a *crime*.

Ananias and *Sapphira* were ſtruck dead, yet they told a *part* of what was the truth, they had ſold the land for a greater price than they were willing to acknowledge to the apoſtles; and there are minds who would ſcarcely have felt the reproaches of conſcience upon ſuch an occaſion. Too many young people, do not ſcruple, where their intereſt or pleaſure is concerned, to hide ſome circumſtances of the truth, while they reveal others; and by this mean think they are exculpated from the charge of lying. But the awful example abovementioned was recorded for our inſtruction, and intended to convey to us a leſſon of high importance. That the Almighty, who is a God of *truth*, and who muſt know our ſmalleſt deviations, will not acquit the guilty; and that however the liar may be ſpared for the preſent, yet there is a *future* day of retribution, when at the laſt and final judgment, every tranſgreſſion ſhall meet with its deſerved puniſhment.

To ſpeak on any ſubject with a deſign to miſlead your hearer, to reveal ſo much of the *truth* as is requiſite to *deceive*, and to be ſilent

about every circumſtance which would give a juſt information, is in effect, though you may not utter a word of falſhood, a premeditated lie in *act*. It muſt require thought, contrivance, and care; and ſurely where theſe are neceſſary to conceal your deſign, you as much intend to cheat the perſon you apply to, as if you affirmed what you knew was an untruth.

Is not this, my young friend, to pervert the powers of language? Can you *believe* a perſon who has once deceived you? Can you rely on his word who has broken his promiſe, or who, by ſome mean ſubterfuge, ſome artful evaſion, has taken advantage of your greater honeſty and candour?

THE path of truth is always open, unembarraſſed and ſafe: the ways of falſhood are intricate, difficult, and perplexed. The deceiver is ever unprepared with a reply to the moſt ſimple queſtion; he muſt guard againſt every poſſible demand, is always ſubject to the ſhame of diſcovery, and to the heſitation of conſcious diſguiſe.

The noble minded, on the contrary, who have no mean ſecret to conceal, who are unapprehenſive of reproach, and unintimidated with the fear of detection, may ſpeak with all the freedom of truth, and are entitled to unbounded confidence. They have no occaſion for a multitude of promiſes, or for ſolemn aſſervations. Their ſimple word is ſufficient to obtain credit, and they are truſted without the ſhadow of a doubt.

THERE is another ſpecies of this crime which is practiſed without any further intention than that of raiſing aſtoniſhment. In reciting a ſtory, ſuch perſons allow themſelves to exaggerate the truth, and make their hiſtories pleaſing by the addition of circumſtances which never happened. Such tales of fiction may amuſe for a while, and occaſion that degree of *wonder* which they are deſigned to excite; but *time* will ſoon diſcover their falſhood; and the relater of them muſt from that period loſe the credit of belief. In vain may he become afterward more circumſpect, it will be long before he can re-eſtabliſh his reputation. However he may on ſome occaſions be really ſincere, his converſation will be attended to

without confidence, and what he affirms be received with doubt and mistrust.

SUCH will be the evil consequences of deceit where it is the most innocent; and surely it would pain a generous mind to be the object of suspicion but for a moment. What can indicate greater meanness, or be more contemptible, than a character on which we have no reliance? or what can convey a more despicable idea than to hear it said, "He *told* me so, but I do not believe him?" Were there no motives of religious duty, even policy would dispose a person to be sincere, since nothing generous, amiable, or great, is ever expected from him who is known to *deceive*. Every duty of life must be interrupted where *doubt* is suffered to prevail; the professions of friendship may be suspected, where truth does not actuate the heart.

WHAT respect can be given to that advice which we are not certain is offered with sincerity? But the person *assures* us of his veracity: it may be so, yet the assurance of those who sometimes deceive is no proof. How then can they

offer ſtronger conviction? It is out of their power: where their *word* is ſuſpected there is no ſurer bond of reliance.

THE ſcriptures call the Devil "the Father of lies," and aſſure us, "that all liars ſhall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimſtone." Which is deſigned to expreſs to us, that they will certainly be partakers of that future ſevere puniſhment which is prepared for the wicked in another life.

FEAR, Vanity, and Pride are the chief cauſes of deceit. To avert an expected evil you may be tempted to the denial of truth, or to a mean equivocation, which is much the ſame in effect; but in the practice of *virtue* our way is certain. Be determined always to do what is *right*, and expect the event without apprehenſion. Difficulties may ariſe to the good, but they cannot ſuffer from *remorſe*. If they experience ſome preſent inconvenience, it will be ſoon over-paſt; and then they will have no regret in looking back on their conduct; Heaven will approve the ſtruggles of virtue, and their character will riſe from every trial.

TEMPTATIONS to evil are no excuſe for our failings. How will piety be known if it be not tried? The merit of truth conſiſts in avowing it in every circumſtance, and in ſuffering all things rather than betray our integrity. Nor is there leſs danger to a youthful mind from the indulgence of vanity. A deſire of appearing ſuperior either in talents or accompliſhments, is frequently a powerful motive in ſome to pretend to more knowledge than they poſſeſs. Hence they are led to depreciate others, and out of a vain pride to put on an appearance of ſuperiority, to which they are certain they have no juſt pretenſions. This haughtineſs of mind will make them deny the moſt convincing arguments, and while they feel that they are to blame, diſpoſe them obſtinately to perſiſt in error, and to diſpute the moſt clear conviction, even at the expence of truth as well as reaſon. Diſguſted if they are oppoſed, their vanity will never acknowledge a fault; and if you aſk them whether they are not convinced, they will ſooner lie, than candidly confeſs it; not conſidering, that modeſty, truth, and an ingenuous acknowledgment, is the beſt atonement for human frailty, and will

entitle thoſe who poſſeſs ſuch engaging qualities to every allowance of candor and generoſity.

THE pride of wiſhing to appear rich and great, is likewiſe in many reſpects a temptation to deceive. Whatever we are aſhamed of, we have a deſire to hide: and ſome young and uninformed minds forget the diſtinction between things which are proper objects of contempt, and thoſe that become ſo only from their miſtaken ideas. All vice, every deviation from virtue, and every mean or baſe action, are the only juſt ſubjects of *ſhame:* and hence it muſt follow, that to be in indigent circumſtances, to be dreſſed in plain cloaths, or to be in any reſpect inferior to your companions, is no reaſon for your ſuffering ſuch a painful ſenſation; but, if you make an apology which is *untrue*, and would hide your real ſituation by deceit, that is a ſufficient cauſe to call forth the bluſhes of ſhame, and will make you deſpicable indeed in the eſteem of perſons of real worth. Be perſuaded, therefore, always to appear in your true character.

AIM not at things beyond your reach. A

good heart is an object worthy of admiration in every ſtation, and in all circumſtances. Let *truth* be your guide through each ſcene of your exiſtence. Maintain a ſacred regard to that principle alike in your thoughts, your words, and your actions. Diſdain even the appearance of falſhood, nor allow the image of deceit a place in your mind. This reſolution will eſtabliſh your reputation on the firmeſt baſis. You will have no fear of any private enquiries, of any ſecret diſcovery; but open, frank, candid, and honeſt, will receive the confidence of all with whom you are connected. And, as the laſt and moſt glorious of all motives, will be entitled to the approbation of your Creator and Preſerver; of that God who is ſtyled, The God of Truth.

SUNDAY IX.

ON PRAYER.

THE obſervance of this duty is ſo neceſſary to your happineſs in this life; and ſo needful to prepare you for the next, that I would wiſh with the greateſt earneſtneſs to enforce it.

You have been taught that it is right to addreſs your prayers every day to the God who made you, to expreſs your thanks for his bleſſings, and to beg the continuance of his protection: but though you may obſerve this cuſtom without the leaſt omiſſion, recollect whether your *thoughts* accompany your *words;* whether in the form which you have been taught to utter, you do not repeat the *ſounds* without attention to the *ſenſe*. When you beg that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, do you

conſider that it is a part of *that will*, that you ſhould *pray* in ſincerity and truth?

Do you reflect, that the Almighty in a particular manner watches your thoughts; and will not accept the words which praiſe his mercy, unleſs the *heart* that offers them is grateful and obedient? Do not, therefore, conſider your morning and evening prayers as a part of the ceremony of dreſſing or undreſſing, to be performed in the ſame careleſs and indifferent manner; but remember, that it ought to be a *ſerious* and *ſolemn* addreſs to God, that you are going to commend yourſelf to his protection through the courſe of the day, or the hours of the night: that in the one caſe, you ſhould beg of him not to leave you to fall into temptation; but to guard you from the commiſſion of wickedneſs, to ſtrengthen your mind to continue in the paths of truth, virtue, and obedience; to thank him for his care of you from any evil accident during the night, and that you are again awake in health and ſafety.

SUCH reflections as these should occupy your thoughts in prayer, not the vain and trifling ideas of your dress, your amusements, nor even your learning. Every thing has its proper season; but surely such imaginations are not suited to the time of *devotion*. If you accustom yourself always to recollect before you begin, on what subject, and to whom you are going to speak, it will make you more serious and attentive; but if with the wild and dissipated spirits of mirthful play, you heedlessly run from your sports, throw yourself on your knees, and *gabble* over your prayers as if it were a continuation of the same nonsense you have been engaged in; it is not to be expected that your attention can be great; or that God, who sees your *heart*, can accept of such petitions.

THE best christians find it difficult with all their care, to keep their minds so fixed, as the holiness and goodness of the Deity demand in such a solemn duty. Surely, therefore, it must require pains to be taken by a child, whose thoughts are still more unsettled, to confine them to the serious subject. Let me advise

you then to consider, for what end it is that you pray at all? Whether you do not hope that God would bless you? that he would give you health? that he would enable you to improve in goodness? that your sins may be forgiven? and that after this life is ended, you may rise from the dead, to enjoy everlasting happiness in heaven?

I CANNOT but suppose you really desire all these blessings: I am sure you must wish for them. But can you imagine that your Creator will grant your request, when you do not *know* what it is that you ask? And, if you will acknowledge the truth, I dare say, *many* a time you have risen from your devotions without being conscious of a word you have uttered.

To those who pray with sincerity, that is, are attentive, and *think* of what they are about, many promises are made in scripture. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," says the apostle. And be assured, that the prayer which is offered up in the best

manner you can, will be heard; though from the lips of a *child.* God is no respecter of persons; nor does he regard the *age* of his worshippers. He will grant every proper petition to those who are of sufficient understanding to *intend* right, and who do their endeavour to perform his will. It is not the *words*, but the *attention* that will please God. If you desire to be good, you must entreat the divine assistance, that you may be able to resist temptation, that you may improve in wisdom, and in virtue.

GOD is the best of all Beings: therefore, by your prayers you do not make *him* more willing to do you good, for he is at all times desirous of your happiness; but, by becoming more obedient, and by asking for those blessings in a *proper* manner, *you* are better disposed to receive them and use them as you ought; and, therefore, are more deserving of God's favor. For none who have been at prayer with seriousness and devotion, can go immediately and be guilty of any great wickedness, at least it is not probable they should; as it will certainly make them more

apt to recollect the presence of God, and more careful to obey his commands.

NOR are you only to be thus watchful over your thoughts in *private*, and suppose that *public* prayer will give a sanction to your roving imagination. When you enter the temple of the Almighty, it is, or *ought* to be, to offer up your solemn petitions before him, in union with numbers of your fellow creatures, who are all professedly met together for the same purpose. Can you therefore imagine at *such* a time, and on *such* an occasion, that your thoughts should be engaged by past amusements, or by plans of future pleasure? That you should indulge yourself in the vain observation of dress and vanity; and survey, with an eye of scrutiny, every ornament of those around you?

Do you consider, that such sacred seasons are designed to improve your heart, to animate your devotion, to exalt your piety to God, and to instruct you in your duty to man? What excuse therefore can you offer to your Maker for the

abuſe of ſuch advantages? An account will be expected at the day of judgment of every ſuch neglect.

THINK of this in time, my young friend; and do not, by contracting an early habit of inattention, render your amendment more difficult. "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth;" as you increaſe in years, endeavour to improve in virtue; preſent the Almighty with the firſt fruits of an innocent heart, uncorrupted by the bad examples of the world. Offer up your fervent petitions as the grateful effuſions of an early ſacrifice, which he will accept with peculiar favor. The cares of future life will render this attention a more *difficult*, though not a leſs neceſſary duty; but if you accuſtom the mind to ſerious reflection, to a due conſideration of the awful preſence of that Being whom you approach to worſhip; if you ſtrive to baniſh every vain idea, by recollecting, that he obſerves your moſt ſecret thoughts, and that your prayers, if *unthinkingly* rehearſed, will become an abomination, will be *diſpleaſing* to him: in ſuch circumſtances, you will habitually

accuſtom yourſelf to ſerioufneſs in your devotion. But this is not an advantage which is eaſily attained. You muſt *perſevere* in this courſe if you deſign that it ſhould ſucceed; and by previous preparation, by reading and ſupplication, endeavour to ſtrengthen your mind againſt the powerful temptation of a wandering imagination. Our thoughts are at all times difficult to reſtrain; every object is apt to inſpire ſome new idea, which gives riſe to others, more and more foreign to the ſacred ſubject which ought ſolely to employ them.

BUT all that is *difficult* is not *impoſſible*. God requires no more than his grace will enable you to perform, if you are not negligent in the uſe of it. He will excuſe, in mercy, ſuch errors as flow from human weakneſs. But he knows exactly how far that weakneſs extends: if you yield to it with approbation, if you indulge it by ſeeking thoſe objects which diſſipate your attention, then your frailty degenerates into *guilt*: then do you incur his diſpleaſure, which is the worſt of all evils, ſince nothing ſo terrible can befal you as the loſs of his favor. On the con-

trary, if you are not wanting in your continued endeavours, to animate your mind with a juſt ſenſe of the importance of this duty, although you may not always (or perhaps but very ſeldom) experience that high delight which reſults from its performance, and, which thoſe who are ſenſible of it, allow to exceed all other pleaſures, you will ſtill have the ſecret ſatisfaction that muſt ariſe from every *endeavour* to pleaſe your Maker; and your petitions will not be diſregarded by him who judgeth the hearts of his worſhippers.

SUNDAY X.

ON PRAYER.

IN every poſſible circumſtance of life, you will find a habit of devotion, a comfort and an aſſiſtance. It will add to the pleaſures of proſperity, to remember with thankful gratitude the great author of all your enjoyments: to praiſe him for thoſe friends he has lent to inſtruct you, to improve you, and to heighten your felicity. You will commend them to his care; your heart will expand to every generous and noble feeling, when you implore for *them* the protection of your Heavenly Father. You will find your affections for thoſe who are dear to you, increaſed by your prayers in their behalf: and, while you ſupplicate Heaven for their happineſs, you will determine to promote it as much as you can, by a virtuous and exemplary conduct. Or, ſhould you ſuffer from afflictions, of whatever kind it may be, are you

in bodily pain, you will be able with humble confidence to ask a blessing on the means which are used for your recovery. At the same time beseeching God to increase your patience, and to fortify your resolution to bear whatever he shall ordain you to undergo. Nor can you imagine, till you have learned by experience, what a satisfaction you will receive from this exercise. All other pleasures are insipid; all amusements lose the power of pleasing; when we suffer from bodily indisposition: but we feel that God is able to assist us; that though outward applications are vain, though medicine should not immediately relieve, yet that God can give success to the kindness of our friends, and impart a healing influence to what is administered to us.

WHATEVER therefore is your situation; however distressed your circumstances, look up to him who is a refuge in trouble. If you mourn the death of your parents, God is the father of the fatherless; he protecteth the cause of the orphan; his mercy can supply to you that greatest loss, and raise up new friends to che-

rish and instruct you. Endeavour to become worthy of his favor, by a strict attention to your duty, and you may approach his throne with full reliance, that he will hear you in the time of trouble. He has told you, in his word, to call upon him? and that "those that come unto him he will in no wise cast out." Does he not know your every secret distress, although you cannot reveal it to any mortal ear? If you are disregarded by those you are with, if you feel forsaken and neglected, remember for your comfort, that you have a friend, who (if you are good) will never leave nor abandon you. A friend, whom death cannot deprive you of; whom absence cannot sever; who will be present in every danger, and who has the *power*, as well as the *kindness* to assist you in all the possible calamities you can experience. Seek to him then from the first dawn of reason; accustom your heart to implore that sacred assistance, to give you increase of knowledge and wisdom.

IN all your enjoyments remember to acknowledge his mercy: in all your improvements thank him for the happiness of instruction, and for the

powers which enable you to receive it. When you ſee others deſtitute of health, deprived of ſight, of the uſe of their limbs, or of any of the comforts which you are ſo happy as to enjoy; let it excite your gratitude to that Being, who has ſo liberally enriched you with his gifts: and let your compaſſionate prayers for the unfortunate, accompany the praiſes of a thankful heart.

To conclude, remember that there can be no real piety, without the exerciſe of true devotion; and that unleſs you endeavour to recollect the object you addreſs, your thoughts will wander upon every other ſubject: and while you kneel before the God of Heaven, if occupied by the vanities of earth, be aſſured, that from ſuch prayers you can experience no ſatisfaction, nor hope to have them accepted by the ſearcher of hearts.

SUNDAY XI.

ON CHARITY.

SURROUNDED with all the comforts, supplied with every neceſſary, and abounding with the ſuperfluities of life, young perſons are apt to forget the ſufferings of thoſe in a leſs happy ſituation. They know, indeed, that the *poor* and the *unfortunate* exiſt in ſome obſcure dwellings; and when they *behold* theſe miſerable objects, the ſight of them may inſpire ſome tranſient feelings of compaſſion. But, my young friend, a *Chriſtian* muſt do more than *pity* the wretched. If you would imitate the example of your Divine Maſter, you muſt *relieve* their diſtreſſes; you muſt alleviate their ſorrows, and ſoften the rigours of poverty. Perhaps you will think, that as you have but a ſmall allowance at your age, the duty of charity may be

excuſed. Yet conſider, that if you can diſpoſe but of a *little*, your own wants are all amply ſupplied; and you may ſurely ſpare from the gratifications of fancy, to thoſe who are deſtitute of every convenience.

CONSIDER how many worthy families eat to-day their ſcanty portion; and, when they riſe from their unſatisfied meal, the cravings of hunger are hardly appeaſed; and yet they are uncertain where to find the next ſupply. How many to the horrors of penury, add the bitter pangs of diſeaſe? Reflect for a moment, how hard *you* find it to ſuffer the agony of pain, although relieved by every art of medicine, and ſoothed by the kind endearments of every ſympathizing friend! But if you could repair to the deſolate manſion of poverty, you would behold none of theſe comforts to abate the anguiſh of the ſufferer. Unknown to the world, the phyſician is not ſummoned to his aſſiſtance; thoſe neceſſaries which might alleviate the diſtemper, he has no money to procure. Unable to riſe and provide, by his uſual labour, for his accuſtomed ſupply, he muſt lay there

and perish, unseen, unattended, unassisted, and unlamented. Or, if he have the blessing of relations, his wife and children do but too often share the same unhappy fate. Shut up together in one small unwholesome apartment, they breathe the infectious air of sickness, till the like disorder extends to each of them, and they have only the additional misery of being the mournful witnesses of each others sufferings.

THINK not that I am speaking of *imaginary* woes: such scenes which I have mentioned are but too frequent and too real. The living and the dead are mingled together in the same contracted room, and all the horrors of sickness and poverty are aggravated by the unwholesome connection. Little do *you* think, while you are in a state so different, while you perhaps are vexed and provoked at every trifling disappointment, how many at this moment suffer the most heart-rending calamity! how many are confined in a loathsome prison, far from their wretched families, who are left to starve in their absence;—confined for the want of a trifling sum

which they have not ability to discharge. I dare say you will pity such distress; but what can *you* do? Can it be thought that the small share of riches you possess can any way assist such heightened calamity? Perhaps not; but in such a case God will accept the benevolent *design* instead of the intended *deed:* for he accepteth "according to what a man *hath*, and not according to what he hath *not*."

BUT these pages may be read by some in more affluent circumstances: to all, however, the widow of *Zarephath*, and the poor woman who threw her two mites into the treasury, are held forth as an example. I do not mean that any are expected to make themselves *poor* by their *donations* to others: but that even those in indigent circumstances, by dispensing a *little* of their small store to those who are still *lower* than themselves, may be entitled to that providential care which ordained, "that the barrel of meal should not waste, nor the cruise of oil fail, till the Lord sent rain upon the earth."

I WOULD wiſh, therefore, to perſuade my young readers, inſtead of ſpending the whole portion allotted to their own diſpoſal, in bawbles, trinkets, or whatever objects may engage their inclination; to reſerve a *part* for the relief of the neceſſitous. And, if they have any ſentiments of religion or duty, if they have any feelings of humanity, they will not eſteem the ſum which they ſo dedicate, as productive of little pleaſure. On the contrary, they will find, that to have contributed to ſtop the falling of *one* tear from the overcharged eye of affliction; to have fed, though but for *one* meal, the ſtarving appetites of a hungry family; to have clothed, though but with a *thin* covering, the ſhivering body of the naked ſufferer; will afford them more true ſatisfaction to reflect upon, than they could receive from the moſt elegant trinket which the hand of luxury might preſent.

SUCH toys may be the occaſion of preſent pleaſure; but that gratification is ſoon paſt: the eye ſoon grows familiar to the moſt beautiful productions of art, and indifference will then ſucceed to deſire. But in the exerciſe of duty, in

promoting the happineſs of others, there is an enjoyment which will laſt for ever; as every recollection of a *good* action is a return of the felicity which it firſt beſtowed.

BY a habit of prudent œconomy much may be ſaved; and if you lay aſide what in your conſcience you think you can ſpare from your income, to be diſpoſed of in charitable uſes, you will have a fund ready at all times, and be more eaſily diſpoſed to diſcharge your duty in this reſpect, than if you conſider each particular ſum as depriving you of ſome indulgence. For whatever you think it reaſonable to dedicate to this benevolent purpoſe, you ought to regard as the *property* of the *poor;* and not allow yourſelf to be ſo unfaithful a ſteward, as to ſpend *their* ſmall proviſion in your own vanity or pleaſure.

WITHOUT ſuch a diſtribution you will be apt to put off your good intention to a *future* period, to wait for objects in *greater* need than thoſe whom you could immediately aſſiſt; and in ſhort, to grow hardened againſt the feelings

of *pity*, by the mean arguments of ſelfiſh avarice. I would certainly adviſe you to a diſcreet choice of the objects of your bounty; in this, as in every other caſe, your parents will be your beſt adviſers: and, if you accuſtom yourſelf to reflect, you will eaſily perceive what caſes are particularly deſerving your compaſſion.

IT is impoſſible to lay down any general rule in a matter which each one's circumſtances muſt determine. The higher in life Providence has placed you, the more exenſive ought to be your charities. Nor can your time be employed to greater advantage, than in attending to ſuch tales of diſtreſs as may be mentioned before you. It will not be eaſy at your age, to ſeek out (in perſon) the ſufferers who want your aſſiſtance; but you may enquire of others for thoſe melancholy objects with which every neighbourhood does but too unhappily abound. Or it is moſt probable, that within your own acquaintance, you are connected with ſome families, whoſe honeſt induſtry is inſufficient for their ſupport.

IF you are earneſt to diſcharge this obliga-

tion to your fellow-creatures, you can never be long in want of the method or the means. Frugality will assist you in the most material part; and the world is but too full of the *unfortunate*, to make the discovery of them a very difficult task.

SUNDAY XII.

ON CANDOR.

THERE is a *charity* due to mankind in *general*, which is much more extenſive in its ſignification than that of alms-giving. The one relates only to the *poor*, the other comprehends many virtues, and is explained by St. *Paul*, in his epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, as the ſubſtance of all our ſocial duties. This charity he tells us, "ſuffereth long, and is kind; it is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

I SHALL not attempt to extend your thoughts at preſent to the whole of the amiable picture which the Apoſtle has drawn of this divine virtue; but confine myſelf to that charity, which diſpoſes us to bear with our fellow-creatures, and to judge kindly of their actions: not to expoſe their faults without occaſion, or

ſo delight in iniquity as to take pleaſure in evil ſpeaking.

IT is often ſeen that young perſons of good-nature and underſtanding, are guilty of this fault through mere *inattention.* They have heard ſome of their acquaintance repreſented as behaving improperly; and without any further reflection, repeat to the next company with whom they are engaged, all the invidious particulars. This may indeed furniſh matter for *preſent* converſation; but you ſhould conſider the future *conſequence.* A *good name* is a property of ſuch ineſtimable value, that nothing can recompence its loſs. Nor can you tell how far the repeating an ill-natured anecdote may affect the abſent perſon. Thoſe who firſt told you the unkind report, may have ſpoken the truth; but conſider how many ways *truth* may be altered in the repreſentation; and the perſon ſo accuſed might be able to juſtify himſelf entirely by the account of ſome circumſtances, or ſome unknown reaſon, which would fully vindicate his conduct.

Is it not highly unchriſtian then to run the

chance of injuring the innocent, for the trifling amuſement of having *ſomething* to *ſay?* But, perhaps, you find a *greater* enjoyment; the perſons you deſcribe to others in a ridiculous, or a blameable light, may have excited your envy by their good qualities, or by being in a more agreeable ſituation than yourſelf; and therefore you are pleaſed with an opportunity to receive any thing to their prejudice.

BUT is this either generous or juſt? Should you like in ſimilar circumſtances that they ſhould act ſo by you? How would you wiſh to be treated if you had done any thing wrong? Should you approve of thoſe who would publiſh the tale to others? Could you eſteem or love them? On the contrary, if you had been ſpoken of with ſlight and contempt, and any perſon had vindicated your character, had checked the reports of ill-nature, or mentioned your praiſeworthy actions; would it not inſpire you with a tender regard for them in future? You would experience a ſatisfaction in their company, and and feel delighted to hear of their ſucceſs. Surely, then, the ſame motives ought to excite every

one to be careful how they ridicule the follies or imperfections of their acquaintance. It betrays a contemptible narrowness of mind, is inconsistent with the candid spirit of a *Christian*, and with that great example of charity which our Divine Master displayed, when he so mildly told the accusers of the woman taken in adultery, that those who were *without sin* amongst them, should cast the first stone at her. Those who had been so vehement and earnest in calling for justice on her crime, "went out," says the sacred historian, "one by one, being convicted by their own consciences."

And certainly this was recorded to teach us, that even where a person is *really* guilty of a fault, we ought not to aggravate their crime, and publish it to others; but to reflect how *many* errors we ourselves are conscious of, and, if we are judged with rigour and severity, how little claim we can have to kindness or pardon.

Perhaps you will say, the offence is well known; it is become the public talk: very likely this *may* be the case: but had the *first* propagators

of an ill report been actuated by *charity*, the ſcandal would not have ſpread ſo widely.

EVERY one to whom you repeat it, (if before ignorant) becomes an additional perſon informed, who will have it in his power ſtill further to extend all the bad conſequences which attend a loſs of reputation, and render it ſo much the more difficult for the offender, by a future reformation, to regain a forfeited good name.

IN truth, there is no opinion more dangerous to a young perſon, than the idea, that their example is of no uſe in ſociety. It is by the addition of units that all numbers muſt be compoſed; and therefore each *one* may be of general ſervice by his virtues, or of general evil by his vices; as they each add ſtrength to the cauſe, either of religion or of wickedneſs.

IF you corrupt *one* companion by your follies; that *one* may in like manner ſeduce a new acquaintance: till your guilt, and the ill effects of your miſdemeanors, may extend to thouſands.

In like manner, though you esteem yourself of such trifling consequence in life; be assured, that by a regularly pious conduct, you may influence numbers to follow the same noble path: and however it may not appear to be your work at present, yet you know not from what seemingly *unnoticed* circumstances a good impression has been frequently produced. You may rest certain, that there is nothing more likely to make others imitate and love you, than a constant attention to that divine precept, "Of always doing unto others as you would they should do unto *you*."

CONSCIENCE in this case, if you consult her faithfully, will dictate the proper conduct. As *you* would like to be treated, so behave to all with whom you are connected. Indulge no selfish passion at the expence of good-nature. The safest side is always to be *kind*. You cannot err in *concealing* the infirmities of others, where *truth* or *honor* does not require the publication: and by a heedless repetition of all you may hear, you are liable to occasion much unhappiness. Do not encourage ungenerous suspicions, for "Charity thinketh no evil."

The *appearance* of an action is often deceitful, and "to his own master each one must stand or fall." God only is the searcher of hearts, and can be acquainted with the secret motives which may aggravate or excuse.

"JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again."

SUNDAY XIII.

ON DEATH.

I THINK I cannot better close these meditations, than with a subject which must concern every reader; with a subject, though it may appear to be most distant from those for whose use this little volume is designed, yet, as the tenure of life is so uncertain, the *youngest* reader may be perhaps the *first* to experience the consequence of—*death.*

THERE are so many accidents, so many distempers from which no prudence can secure, no situation can exempt, nor the strength and vivacity of youth guard their possessor, that you will do well, to consider how far you are interested in that momentous period.

DEATH, my dear friend, has no terrors but what are the consequence of guilt. It is the

happy moment when every temptation ſhall ceaſe, when every evil ſhall be at an end; and what matters it if you are called from a world of trouble at an early age: happy will be your lot, to be ſpared from all the dangers that might ſhake your virtue in a longer trial. The only thing therefore which ſhould concern you in the proſpect of this ſolemn period, is to conſider, whether you are prepared for that future judgment which is to follow.

You know what are your deſigns, and how far you endeavour to act up to that reaſon, and thoſe advantages which the Almighty has given you. "Beloved," ſays the apoſtle, "if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." That is, if upon a ſerious examination of your life, after ſincerely conſidering the motives of your conduct, and comparing your actions with what you know is expected from you: if then you can faithfully ſay,—I have, as far as I could, conſtantly endeavoured to do my duty; I have tried, by reading good books, to improve my underſtanding, and to follow the

advice, and profit by the examples which they afforded me; I have obſerved the inſtructions of my parents, and obeyed them in all things within my power; when I have been guilty of any offence, I have been ſorry for it, implored the pardon of my God, and determined to be more careful for the future; I can truly ſay, that I have felt no envy, malice, nor ill-will to any one, but have done *ſome* good in the world, though perhaps it has been in my power to be more uſeful; I have been honourable and juſt, have ſtrictly obſerved the truth, both in my words and actions; I repent of all my ſins, and hope in the merits of my Redeemer;—If you can ſay this without evaſion, (I do not mean as a boaſt of your good deeds to others;) and can anſwer as in the preſence of the Almighty, that this has been your courſe of life, and your conſtant endeavour; then you may quit this life without fear; and have a juſt foundation for confidence in God.

REMEMBER, that to deceive yourſelf, and to hide your faults by vain excuſes, however it may *now* quiet your conſcience, will be of no

avail at the day of judgment. Every emotion of your heart is known to the Divine Being. Be not afraid therefore to own your transgressions, and to confess them before him at present; but while you have life, health, and opportunity, determine to amend. Whatever may have been your failings, and how private soever they may have been committed, they are known, with every aggravated circumstance, to your Judge.

THIS thought cannot be too deeply impressed. Every passionate emotion, every ill-natured intention, however disguised; every deceitful word, with each angry revengeful resolution; in short, every evil *thought* is known and remembered by God. The days, and months, and years of life succeed each other so swiftly, and are so much alike, that you may be apt to forget the period of death, though it will certainly arrive." Many as young as yourself, are every hour surprised; and who can tell how soon it may be *your* fate?

IF you defer your amendment to a more con-

venient ſeaſon, that promiſed ſeaſon may never arrive. You may not live to ſee the time you have fixed for your improvement; and how ſad will be the reflection, that for the ſake of ſome preſent trifle, to obtain ſome ſlight gratification, you have forfeited your honor by deceit, loſt your good temper by petulance and reſentment, or in any manner incurred the diſpleaſure of God!

A *good conſcience* is the greateſt felicity: *that* alone can give you ſatisfaction through life, and comfort you in the hour of death. With the aſſurance of having acted rightly, how delightful is the proſpect of futurity! The greateſt and beſt of Beings is your friend. He will not be extreme to mark what you have done amiſs, but will pardon the natural imperfections of his creatures.

Wilful crimes alone, continued in without repentance or reformation, will ſubject you to the miſery and puniſhment of a future ſtate. But then no *evaſions* can deceive his knowledge. Recollect this, and examine yourſelf impartially.

Do not accuſe others of being the occaſion of your crimes. Each one muſt anſwer for his own guilt. You will not be judged by the meaſure of *their* tranſgreſſions, nor acquitted for *their* virtues. Did you know your Duty? Did you practiſe it? Anſwer to yourſelf theſe plain queſtions, and ſeek not to juſtify what you perceive has been faulty, by blaming others. Suppoſe, for inſtance, that your companions have been paſſionate and provoking; that was *their* offence, for which they muſt anſwer. To you this injurious behaviour was a temptation. How did you bear it? If you were angry in return, gave back defiance for their menaces, reſolved to be ſpiteful in future, and teaze them when you ſhould have power; *this* will be *your* guilt, and you may dread its puniſhment.

If others fail in their duty it does not excuſe you. The being provoked by unkind treatment may add to the merit of a mild and gentle demeanour; but can never ſet aſide the neceſſity of virtue. We are too apt, eſpecially in the warmth of youthful reſentment, to think we have a right to return malevolence by equal ill-nature.

But this is the ſuggeſtion of *anger* not of *duty:* and when you come to be on a ſick bed, to be in danger of *death*, you will think differently. The preſent is the only time to make uſe of good reflections, by putting them in practice. Spare yourſelf then the pain of future remorſe, by conſidering, while you have opportunity, how your actions will appear to you at ſuch an awful period. With what pleaſure you will then recollect the reſiſtance you have made to any evil inclination: what joy you will experience in reflecting upon every good action; how much delight it will be to conſider each inſtance of your *ſincerity*, *obedience*, *affection*, and *piety*. How infinitely will every ſacrifice, or ſelf-denial, be overpaid by the conſideration of the reward to which you are haſtening. And, as this time *muſt* arrive at *ſome* ſeaſon of your life, as you do not know how ſoon it may ſurpriſe you, is it not worth all your care and attention to make it happy and deſirable? To avoid all the agonies of a guilty conſcience, terrified by the dread of puniſhment, and a fear of meeting that God, who is the *friend*, the *protector*, and the graci-

ous *rewarder* of the *virtuous?* Let me, therefore, in conclusion, entreat you to remember how trifling every earthly concern will appear to you when you come to die. Let me conjure you to present your early days as a pleasing offering to Heaven; not to embitter your *future* hours by mispending the *present.* To arm your mind with fortitude; and by reflecting, that if *now* you suffer difficulties, *hereafter* you shall rejoice in Heaven. If vice appear more easy and alluring, and virtue require some trouble to obey her at all times, yet the recompence that awaits you is *glorious;* and the evils you will avoid are dreadful beyond any thing you can imagine.

ALL that has been said in the foregoing pages is intended to promote the cause of religion and truth, and however defective may be the execution, it is most sincerely designed to advance your real interest.

WITH the most ardent wishes for your welfare, the author concludes this little work;

entreating the young reader to reflect seriously upon its contents, and to remember, that the *subjects* are worthy of the most attentive consideration.

END OF VOL. I.